Subject: 1809 half-cent coin

Pegram, Howard
[Gaffney, SC]

1934

307 W. Birnie Street,
Gaffney, S. C.
March 28, 1934.

Numismatic Expert,
c/o N. Y. C. of C.,
New York, N. Y.

Dear Sir:-

Salvation Army's Atlanta-published War Cry for March 24, 1934, carried on p. 2 a news story headed, New Orleans Woman Owns Most Valuable Coin. Quoting:-

"One of the nation's most valuable coins is owned by a New Orleans woman....(Mrs. Charles Albert Curliss.)

"....it is a half-cent piece. To-day it is worth exactly $5,772.86.

"'The lone coin, the half-cent piece of 1809,' is the verdict of numismatists.

"There is not another in existence in any private collection in America, and probably not in Uncle Sam's exhibits in Washington, they add."

I have been under the impression that there were a good many half-pennys extant, and that they were of no particular value. I did not know that the coinage of 1809 stood above the others. I should greatly appreciate your advising me as to whether the above news story is accurate as to the scarcity and value of this particular coin, and if not, what the present value is. I am enclosing a stamped envelope for your convenience.

Very truly yours,
Howard Pegram
Howard Pegram.

1.154.572 made
worth from 10 to 15

April 2, 1934.

Mr. Howard Pegram
307 W. Birnie St.
Gaffney, S. C.

Dear Sir:

The New York Chamber of Commerce has forwarded your letter on to us for reply. Newspaper accounts of coins, especially when rarities and value are involved, are notoriously inaccurate. We have seldom seen a newspaper account that is correct. The notation about the half cent belonging to a New Orleans woman is about the worst we have ever seen. There were 1,154,572 half cents made in 1809. Thousands are still in existence. The quotation for these runs from ten cents to a dollar, according to condition. To be worth a dollar it would have to be absolutely uncirculated and almost the brilliant copper color as it came from the mint. As a matter of fact the date 1809 is one of the commoner of the series.

Very truly yours,

HW:JG

Curator